

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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P R 131313Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2767
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
CINCLANT FOR POLAD
SECSDEF WASHDC
CNO WASHDC
CSAF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRIDGETOWN 1059

LIMDIS

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, US, UK, AC
SUBJECT: RENEWAL OF US MILITARY FACILITIES ON ANTIGUA

REF BRIDGETOWN 1047 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY:

IN THREE DAYS OF FORMAL NEGOTIATING SESSIONS, ANTIGUANS
EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS IN PRINCIPLE TO CONTINUE US NAVAL AND
AIR FORCE FACILITIES ON ANTIGUA BUT HELD OUT FOR (A) EXTENSIVE
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TIED TO RENEWAL OF FACILITIES AGREEMENT
AND (B) ANNUAL RENTAL GREATLY IN EXCESS OF US OFFER OF
\$ 1 MILLION. ANTIGUANS REQUESTED CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSIONS
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IN LATE JUNE IN WASHINGTON AND US TEAM AGREED. HOWEVER,
THIS POSITION WAS SUBSEQUENTLY ALTERED BY PREMIER BIRD, AS
REPORTED SEPTEL. FOLLOWING SHOULD BE REGARDED ONLY AS
SUMMARY OF FORMAL REPEAT FORMAL SESSIONS MAY 9-11. END SUMMARY.

1. AT OPENING SESSION MAY 9, PREMIER BIRD EMPHASIZED
CLOSE AND CORDIAL WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN US AND

ANTIGUA. AT SAME TIME HE UNDERLINED ANTIGUAN EXPECTATION THAT RENEWAL OF FACILITIES AGREEMENT WOULD BE OCCASION FOR VASTLY INCREASED BILATERAL US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO ANTIGUA. PREMIER ALLUDED TO POLITICAL CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN CARIBBEAN (THE "SOFT UNDERBELLY OF US" AS DEPUTY PREMIER LATER CHARACTERIZED REGION) AND POINTED OUT US SELF-INTEREST IN SUPPORTING STABLE AND DEMOCRATIC ANTIGUA AS MODEL FOR AREA. BIRD WELCOMED PRESIDENT CARTER'S ADDRESS TO OAS AND RELATED SEVERAL OF PRESIDENT'S THEMES DIRECTLY TO ANTIGUAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS. (LATTER WERE DETAILED IN POSITION PAPER DISTRIBUTED TO CONFEREES. SEE BELOW.) BIRD POINTEDLY RECALLED RECENT US AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES "WEAVING MILITARY BASE AGREEMENTS WITH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE" AND SAID THIS PATTERN MIGHT WELL BE WOVEN INTO ANTIGUAN NEGOTIATIONS.

2. AFTER BRIEF RESPONSE BY US TEAM LEADER, HEAVNER, PREMIER BIRD TURNED OVER DISCUSSION TO HIS ADVISORS, NOTABLY DEPUTY PREMIER LESTER BIRD (HIS US-EDUCATED SON AND HEIR APPARENT), ATTORNEY GENERAL COSMOS PHILLIPS, AND FINANCE MINISTER RUEBEN HARRIS. THEY SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF ABOUT 20 ANTIGUAN PROPOSALS LINKED (TENUOUSLY IN MANY CASES) TO PROVISIONS OF 1961 WEST INDIES AGREEMENT. PROPOSALS DID NOT CARRY DOLLAR FIGURES NOR SUGGEST CHANGES IN WORDING OF 1961 AGREEMENT. PROPOSALS RANGED FROM REHABILITATION OF PORT FACILITIES AND INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF AIRPORT (USED BY US MILITARY) TO WIDE-RANGING PLANS FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, IRRIGATION PROJECTS. PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING FOR A COAST GUARD FUNCTION, AND CHANGES IN US LAW AND

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REGULATIONS TO BENEFIT ANTIGUAN ECONOMIC INTERESTS. ATTORNEY GENERAL PHILLIPS INDICATED THAT RENEGOTIATION OF FORMULA FOR US CONTRIBUTION TO COOLIDGE FIELD MAINTENANCE, WHICH RESULTED OVER TIME IN US PAYMENT SO LOW AS TO BE RIDICULOUS, WAS ALSO REQUIRED. FINALLY, GOA ASKED FOR UNSPECIFIED "LUMP SUM AND ANNUAL PAYMENTS" FOR MAINTENANCE OF US FACILITIES.

3. HEAVNER SET FORTH DETAILED US POSITION AT SECOND SESSION ON MAY 10. HE NOTED INSTRUCTIONS REFLECTED CAREFUL ASSESSMENT OF (A) VALUE USG ATTACHES TO FACILITIES IN TERMS OF DEFENSE POSTURE AND COSTS OF RELOCATION, (B) OUR WISH TO BE RESPONSIVE TO GOA NEEDS, AND (C) WILLINGNESS OF CONGRESS AND PUBLIC TO SUPPORT EXECUTIVE BRANCH PROPOSALS. HOWEVER, HEAVNER REITERATED HERE (AND THROUGHOUT SESSIONS) STRONG US VIEW THAT DIRECT LINKAGE OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO RENEWAL OF MILITARY FACILITIES WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO US AND POSSIBLY DISADVANTAGEOUS FOR ANTIGUANS. ON THE OTHER HAND, US CONTRIBUTES SUBSTANTIALLY TO CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (CDB) AND THERE IS GROWING CONCERN AND

INTEREST IN WASHINGTON ABOUT PROBLEMS OF LDCS IN GENERAL AND CARIBBEAN AREA IN PARTICULAR. US TEAM RECALLED NUMEROUS WAYS BY WHICH LOCAL US MILITARY HAD ASSISTED ANTIGUAN ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAID US PREPARED TO CONTINUE THIS GOOD NEIGHBORLY COOPERATION WITHIN LIMITS OF OUR CAPABILITIES.

4. HEAVNER CIRCULATED US PAPER CONTAINING US PROPOSALS: (A) CONTINUATION OF 1961 AGREEMENT TO DECEMBER 31, 1988 WITH MINOR TEXTUAL CHANGES NEEDED TO BRING OLD AGREEMENT UP TO DATE; (B) ANNUAL LEASE PAYMENT OF \$300,000 FOR EACH FACILITY (\$600,000 TOTAL) RENEWABLE ANNUALLY AT US OPTION; (C) AN ADDITIONAL \$500,000 IN FIRST YEAR IN VIEW OF ANTIGUAN REQUEST FOR LUMP SUM; (D) WILLINGNESS TO RELEASE CERTAIN LANDS AS DELINEATED IN SUBSEQUENT US-ANTIGUAN DISCUSSIONS (E) WILLINGNESS TO STUDY IN GOOD FAITH MEANS TO EXPAND ANTIGUAN EMPLOYMENT AT FACILITIES AND EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES
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FOR ON THE JOB TRAINING. HEAVNER ADDED ORALLY THAT IN CONTEXT OF NEW AGREEMENT US WOULD BE WILLING TO RECONSIDER FORMULA CONTAINED IN 1966 US-GOIA AGREEMENT ON COMPENSATION FOR USAF USE OF COOLIDGE FIELD PROVIDED THAT RATIO OF US USE TO AIRFIELD USE REMAINED UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE. HEAVNER CHARACTERIZED US OFFER AS FAIR AND JUST FOR MILITARY FACILITIES, BUT NECESSARILY SEPARATE FROM OTHER ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS, WHICH WOULD BE MINDS OF USG EVEN IF LACK OF AGREEMENT ON FACILITIES SHOULD LEAD TO LATTER'S HAVING TO BE WITHDRAWN.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRIDGETOWN 1059

LIMDIS

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

5. RESPONDING IN AFTERNOON SESSION MAY 10, PREMIER BIRD EXPRESSED DEEP DISAPPOINTMENT AT US OFFER. HE RECALLED USG HAD USE OF MILITARY FACILITY FOR 36 YEARS WITHOUT ANY DIRECT COMPENSATION TO ANTIGUA. GOA DID NOT REGRET THIS, AS IT FELT ANTIGUA HAD THEREBY CONTRIBUTED TO DEFENSE OF HEMISPHERE. GOA WANTED FACILITIES TO CONTINUE. IT WOULD NOT "BRANDISH COMMUNISM" TO STIMULATE USG CONCERN, BUT IT HOPES USG WILL SHOW SAME SYMPATHY FOR ANTIGUAN NEEDS THAT IT HAS SHOWN IN VAST ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. (ANTIGUANS, PROBABLY ASSISTED BY TWO AMERICAN ATTORNEYS WHO OBSERVED SESSIONS, CIRCULATED DETAILED LIST OF US FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS CONNECTED TO RECENT BASE AGREEMENTS WITH SPAIN, TURKEY, ETC., AND SOURCE OF US STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR THESE COMMITMENTS). PREMIER CONFIDENTIAL

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SUGGESTED US TEAM TAKE ANTIGUAN VIEWS TO WASHINGTON FOR SECOND LOOK.

6. DEPUTY PREMIER LESTER BIRD MORE VIGOROUSLY BELITTLED US OFFER CALLING LUMP SUM "DERISORY" AND SAYING \$10 MILLION ANNUAL RENT FAR MORE APPROPRIATE -- EVEN IF ANTIGUANS NEVER FULLY AWARE OF PURPOSE, OR SIGNIFICANCE, AND THEREFORE VALUE OF FACILITIES TO US. HE DEPLORED SITUATION WHERE ANTIGUA HOSTED US FACILITIES, WHILE OTHERS DID NOT, YET USG DEALT ONLY ON REGIONAL BASIS THROUGH CDB AND (ACCORDING TO UNNAMED US SOURCES) HAD TAKEN POSITION THAT BILATERAL ASSISTANCE UNAVAILABLE TO ANTIGUANS. MOREOVER, ANTIGUA NEEDED GRANTS, NOT LOANS AT COMMERCIAL RATES. DEPUTY PREMIER'S POINTS WERE ECHOED BY PHILLIPS AND HARRIS.

7. HEAVNER SUMMARIZED EMERGING POINTS OF DIFFERENCES AS (A) QUESTION OF "LINKAGE" OF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE MATTER AND (B) AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION. REGARDING ASSISTANCE, HE REITERATED US NEED TO LOOK AT REGION AS A

WHOLE, AND IN FIRST INSTANCE TO POORER COUNTRIES SUCH AS HAITI. HE STRESSED DIFFICULTIES FOR US IN LINKING DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS WITH UNRELATED MILITARY NEEDS. ON RENTAL AMOUNT, HE SAID \$10 MILLION WAS SIMPLY OUT OF THE QUESTION. EARLIER US OFFER CAREFULLY BASED ON VALUE OF FACILITY TO MILITARY SERVICES AND ATTITUDES OF CONGRESS.

8. AT FINAL SESSION MAY 11, HEAVNER AGAIN STRESSED US OPPOSITION TO "LINKAGE" AND HELD OUT NO HOPE THAT THIS USG POSITION WOULD CHANGE. ON RENTAL, HE MADE FALL BACK OFFER, SAYING US PREPARED TO PAY \$1 MILLION TOTAL ANNUAL RENTAL FOR BOTH FACILITIES, STRESSING THAT THIS OFFER A VERY SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT OVER INITIAL US PROPOSAL.

9. AFTER SHORT RECESS, PREMIER BIRD SAID HE APPRECIATED THE IMPROVEMENT IN THE US OFFER AND HE WOULD " NOT TURN CONFIDENTIAL

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DOWN" THE \$ MILLION ANNUAL FIGURE, BUT WOULD LIKE TO TAKE OFFER UNDER ADVISEMENT UNTIL PLANNED VISIT TO US IN LATE JUNE, WHEN IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO ADD TO RENTAL FIGURE AND ALSO EXPLORE IN MORE DETAIL THE POSSIBILITIES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE THIS LED TO MORE INFORMAL DISCUSSION OF MODALITIES OF US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, WITH US TEAM SEEKING TO DAMPEN ANTIGUAN EXPECTATIONS, BUT WITH ANTIGUANS REMAINING HOPEFUL THAT FACE-TO-FACE CONTACTS WITH WASHINGTON OFFICIALS WOULD RESULT IN BETTER TERMS THAN OFFERED BY US NEGOTIATING TEAM.

10. COMMENT: ANTIGUANS PROVED VERY FRIENDLY AND HOSPITABLE, AND DISCUSSIONS WERE BOTH CANDID AND CORDIAL. PREMIER BIRD (THE GRAND OLD MAN OF ANTIGUAN POLITICS) SEEMED MORE INCLINED TO ACCEPT US OFFER, BUT CLEARLY HAD TO COPE WITH MORE SKEPTICAL ATTITUDE AND AGGRESSIVE DEMANDS OF YOUNGER GENERATION OF HIS COLLEAGUES, NOTABLY LESTER BIRD AND PHILLIPS. OUTCOME OF ARGUMENT WITHIN ANTIGUAN TEAM ON THIS POINT SHOULD BE CLEAR AFTER HEAVNER VISITS ANTIGUA MAY 16 FOR FURTHER PRIVATE TALK WITH PREMIER. END COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

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